

Madison, Wis. July 4, 1954

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Dear Syd:

We were happy to have news of your final safe return home. We could not begrudge this of you, but we enjoyed your visit so thoroughly we were sorry it could not be longer. As you know, Nancy Millis is safely here and, I believe, is living with Helen Byers and the other girls. We've seen her but once. It is too bad she did not arrange to go to P.G. this year: I understand (but am not certain) that van Niel will be away next summer. Tom Nelson is out there now, will come back briefly in September, and then go out to the new Institute of Biology (Wakeman's) at Rutgers University, with Szybalski. By the way, he inherited your apartment (at \$65) and now Boris has it (at \$55!). This is enough statistics to plot a distribution curve of business acumen, or perhaps only the fluctuation of supply and demand.

A few comments on your Report (which Hans Ris kept for some time, after which I was in and out of town myself). First of all, it is just superbly written-- I had no idea you would take so much trouble over it. This is not to minimize its factual content: all in all, I cannot think how you could have spent your few months more productively, and the background you (and I!) have now picked up will be indispensable for later. Just for pique, two types: p. 1, loss of cytoplasmic; p. 17 strains were unavailable. p. 26 Table, WY-28, 29: what does "coon" mean. In re table 6, what do you think of the effect of air there? Would it be worthwhile to set up Warburg comparisons of respiration of WY-6, 8 (+ KCN also)? Do you have any Nadi, spectral data on WY-8? Bob Wright is gradually shifting his program over here, but will stay in biochem. till September. Meanwhile, we've gotten some better haploids from Caroline Raut. If they hold up for our needs, and prove to be good oxidisers too, we'll exchange them and any auxotrophs he may get from them. I'm pleased that the shipment of cultures arrived OK. I hope you found the TM2, phage, and chemicals in the same parcel (per shipping ticket). I've not seen too much of Hans, and he's in Europe now. But before he left, I set up some WY-6 and -8 for him to embed. I think he means to section and examine that material at Stockholm.

I should thank you for the sample of New Zealand agar that your department sent. After shipping and duty (especially the latter), this proved to be not much cheaper than the domestic overpriced stuff. But I'd have ordered a ton of it except that your sample seemed to be contaminated with at least biotin as representative of growth factors. I have ordered about 20% more, hope it may be somewhat better. Do you plan any more, or have any relevant records on the streptomycin-resistance transformation?

The main thing new in my own lab work is that I've shifted the micromanipulator back to coli work (since coming back from the Oak Ridge meeting in April) and in snatches of time between papers and trips (or so it seems) have been looking again for the coli zygotes, this time with better luck. In a setup with Hfr motile x F- nonmotile, one easily finds a fair number of coupled cells (one of each parent) swimming through the drops. They are easily detected by their tumbling motion; I'd missed them before for not using a motile parent, an idea that came from the *Salmonella semiclonales*. Anyhow, the pairs disjoin after an hour or two, and clones from the exconjugants very often show recombinants, but only from the F- cell. The mode of connection is not clear, probably like the stained photographs I showed you, but the conjugation tube is not visible in life, though it may be stretched to as much as a micron or more in length (in terms of separation of visibly attached cells).

The weather here has been unbearably hot and cold by spells; we're planning to leave here about July 20, first for Ann Arbor and then (August) for the Marine Biological Lab., Woods Hole, Mass. I should see Phruss there, among others.

Eather and I send our best, of course, and hope to hear from you occasionally.

Yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

P.S. It was most considerate of you to write to Bernard from the Pitcairns. A validly used stamp from there is something of a rarity. My brother writes proudly of having gotten into pampalship with Michael.